

28 February 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Analysis Branch, DD/CR
FROM : Chief, Publications Staff, OIC
SUBJECT : Release of CIA/RR OM 62-1, The Berlin Wall,
February 1962, Confidential, to Foreign
Governments

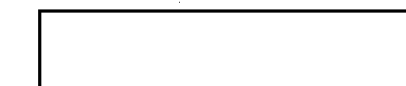
1. It is requested that the attached copies of subject report be forwarded as follows:

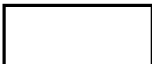
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2. All ORR responsibilities as defined in the DDJ memorandum of 13 August 1952, "Procedures for Dissemination of Finished Intelligence to Foreign Governments," as applicable to this report, have been fulfilled.

14 Attachments



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DATE: 19/8/29 REVIEWER: 

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29 FEB 1962

GEOGRAPHIC
INTELLIGENCE
MEMORANDUM

29 FEB 1962

CIA/RR GM 62-1
February 1962

15 MAR 1962

THE BERLIN WALL



DOCUMENT NO. 1
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐
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DATE: 29/8/79 REVIEWER:

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

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THE BERLIN WALL

The Berlin wall is now a fact of life. It has and will continue to have fundamental influences on the everyday life of Berliners and on East-West negotiations concerned with the city and issues related to it. The purpose of this report is to describe the wall as it stands today to provide a framework for evaluating ongoing intelligence. The miscellany of makeshift barriers that comprised the wall in the fall of 1961 has now been replaced by permanent structures. Changes on still to be expected but they probably will be relatively minor in character and will have little effect on the functioning of the wall.

Evolution of the Wall

The border between East Berlin and West Berlin was adopted by the European Advisory Commission on 12 September 1948. It passed through the center of the city in a jagged line that follows the borough boundaries as established by a decree of 27 March 1958. Recent growth of the city, however, has shown little regard for these limits. As a result the border in some places runs along the side of streets or cuts through buildings and across plots of land.

Even before 13 August 1961, all streets that crossed the border were blocked to vehicular traffic or were under surveillance by East German Police. Vehicular traffic was checked but restriction on pedestrians was limited to an occasional spot check. The S-Bahn (elevated electric railroad) and the U-Bahn (underground electric railroad) also crossed the border at several points. Although there were facilities for inspection and control of traffic, such restrictions as were applied were relatively ineffective, as the number of refugees attested.

The sealing of crossing points between East and West Berlin began before August on 12 August 1961. Initially, the methods and material used were fairly crude and expeditious. Beginning about 15 August, however, more permanent barriers were erected at a few points. Later at others, well the border began to take on some of the characteristics of a real "wall." Major breach made the first public reference to the border barriers as a "wall" in his speech to the Bundestag on 10 August, when he compared it to the "Great Wall of China." On 13 September the *Spandauer Volksblatt* referred to the barriers as "The Wall of the Shame." The title was adopted readily and has been used frequently since that time.

At first, several of the crossing points along the border were blocked by a single roll of corrugated barbed wire stretched across the street and attached at the ends to buildings or existing walls or fences. Other points were blocked merely by harved wire strung across the cobblestone street and placing the removed stones in layers in front of the excavations. In still other places the methods were combined. Subsequently, concrete and wooden posts were installed and wire fencing was attached. Large concrete slabs and stone construction began to appear at various points along the wall, and windows and doors of buildings on the border were sealed. Frequently, the hastily constructed expedients began to assume the character of the obstacle now commonly called the "wall."

The evolving wall and its rigid controls prompted several dramatic escapes by crawling through the barriers. The East German authorities responded by restoring the destroyed portions and tightening security along the wall. Such efforts did not reduce appreciably the number of break-throughs, and in 10 November another major construction effort was organized and barriers across

likely avenues of escape were reinforced. The East German command was at Friederichstrasse and other crossing points, strengthening the walls, adding traffic masts, installing tank barriers, and narrowing the passageways for vehicles and pedestrians. Throughout the entire process of sealing off the border, many residents living near the border were evacuated; houses and garden houses were destroyed; and a cleared area was established to provide the border guards with more effective fields of observation and fire.

Consistent with the sealing of the border between sectors, the East German authorities tightened security along the sector/sector boundary. Double wire fences, placed strips, watch towers, and bunkers were constructed, and residents were evacuated. The borders of West Berlin are now as tightly, if not more tightly, sealed as the international boundaries along the Iron Curtain.

Characteristics of the Wall

The popular designation of the entire barrier system along the sector border as "the wall" has created some false impressions. Actually, the wall is a system of barriers and obstructions of many different types, not a steady, uniform feature. Throughout the entire length of 143 kilometers (about 88 1/2 miles), it closely parallels but does not always coincide with the sector boundary. For about 28 kilometers or 65 percent of the length the wall traverses areas that are built up on one or both sides. It is in the middle section that most of the masonry wall has been built. The rest of the border consists of multiple fences or barbed wire or wire netting, which in many places follow such preexisting barriers as notwork around as cables or railway embankments. The main "wall" is generally reinforced by armed guards and secondary obstructions such as wire netting, sand berriers, belts of turn-up pavement, cleared strips, and observation posts. Here and there, some fences of light construction seem to have been erected, mainly to cut off visual contact between East and West Berliners. Action on the announced plan to clear a strip 100 meters wide along the border has for the most part been limited to the suburban areas at either end of the border, where the clearing has consisted mainly of removing orchards, gardens, tool sheds, and a relatively small number of private houses.

In the heart of the city the wall consists almost entirely of masonry or the sealed facades of buildings. This stretch, about 13 1/2 kilometers long, extends from just south of Bornholmer Strasse to Schillingstrasse, except for about 10 1/2 kilometers where the water barriers forming the boundary are paralleled by barbed-wire fences.

The strongest part of the wall is at the Brandenburg Gate. Here prefabricated concrete slabs have been arranged in layers forming a wall 7 feet high and 6 feet thick with reinforced steel posts. To the north and south of the Brandenburg Gate the masonry wall is made of prefabricated concrete slabs about 1 foot thick. At sharp curves and awkward corners, smaller concrete blocks are used; they are also used to add extra height to parts of the wall. In most places the wall averages 8 feet high, but along Bornholmer Strasse parts of it are 10 feet high and along the French Consulate, even higher. Generally the wall is topped by Y-shaped iron rods strung with barbed wire. Previously existing walls have been used as primary barriers in those areas of the city where they were conveniently situated and suitably constructed. Barbed wire and, to some extent, broken glass have been added. Runway barriers also extend for about 1 1/2 kilometers along the western edge of Tempelhof and for an almost equal length around the US European-Chinese plant in Wilhelmsruh.

At Friederichstrasse and other crossing points, strengthening the walls, adding traffic masts, installing tank barriers, and narrowing the passageways for vehicles and pedestrians. Throughout the entire process of sealing off the border, many residents living near the border were evacuated; houses and garden houses were destroyed; and a cleared area was established to provide the border guards with more effective fields of observation and fire.

Dank barriers consisting of heavy steel tripods anchored in the road with counter back up the masonry wall at several places. One stretch of such barriers runs from Yon Strasse south of the Rickstrasse ruins to Strassenma Strasse. Others are located on Kienbergstrasse at Willich Strasse and at Friederichstrasse, on Sebastian Strasse, and along the S-Bahn tracks between Wilhelmsruh and Schillingstrasse.

Wherever the border in Berlin follows along waterways (a total of 13.3 kilometers), the barrier characteristics of the waterway have been exploited, and have been reinforced on one or both banks by barbed-wire fences and in places by stone walls. Stationary or mobile guard posts provide additional reinforcement. Railroad lines and ports, while parallel the sector boundary for about 10.3 kilometers, have barbed-wire fences on one or both sides. In some places rail sidings also have been exploited as barriers.

There is considerable variety in the way fences are employed as barriers. In some places they are the primary obstacle; in other places they are subsidiary obstacles. The barbed-wire fences consist of 6 to 8 strands of heavy barbed wire mounted on sturdy reinforced concrete posts. In many places they are erected in a system of 2, 3, or 4 parallel fences, 6 to 7 feet high. The area along the fences may be lighted at night. In other places, chain-link fences are topped by barbed wire. Barbed-wire coils are now used to back or primary barriers.

In the suburbs, cleared areas have been established to permit better control of the barriers. Former garden colonies -- such as Schbbske, Bohnen, Spatzelsfeld, Gensend, and Am Rumpfen -- have been cleared of trees, tool sheds, or anything else that might obstruct the view from the observation towers.

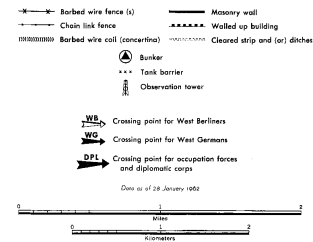
All these physical barriers are policed by a large complement of Soviet and/or East German security personnel. The guards are disposed in both stationary and mobile units. Stationary posts include a number of observation posts at strategic points, particularly in suburban and suburban areas. Within the inner city, observation posts are also located in the top floors of some buildings. At East German observation post has been been established in the facade of the Church of the Altesse. Other stationary posts guard sensitive and vulnerable areas, primarily street intersections. Mobile guard units patrol the barriers. Their mobility -- the uncertainty as to their location at any given moment -- provides the physical barriers with additional security.

By virtue of the wall, the sector boundary has acquired the same of an international boundary without a change in its legal status. It functions effectively and is now almost as much a part of the Iron Curtain as any of the legally recognized international boundaries dividing East from West. The recent erection of buildings at several crossing points, presumably to be used in implementing the new East German custom the West finally created, is another step in the direction of making the sector boundary function as an international boundary.

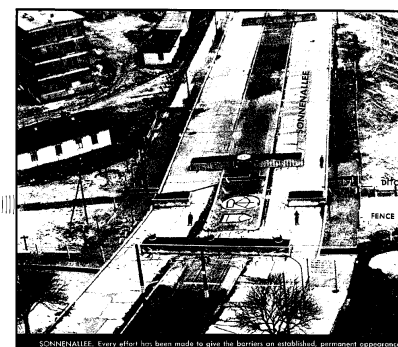
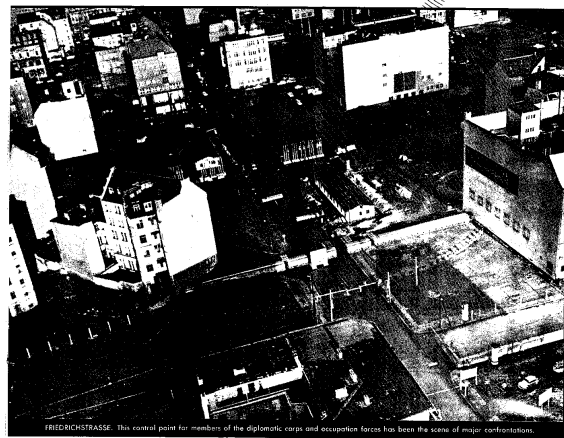
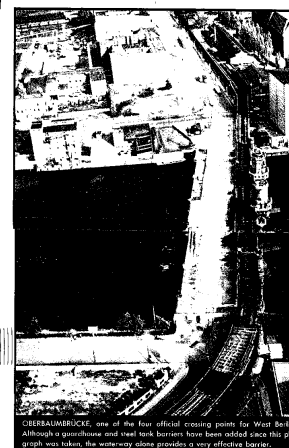
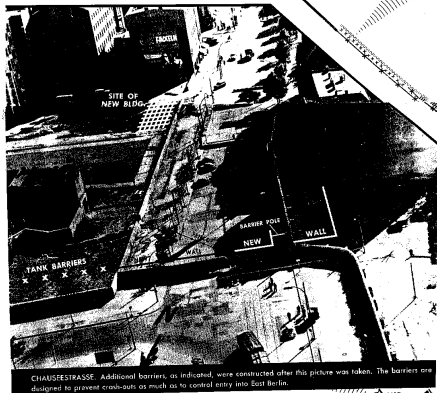
APPROXIMATE BORDER CROSSING POINTS*

NUMBERS OF DISPERSED CROSSING POINTS	APPROXIMATE BORDER CROSSING POINTS
1. Bornholmer Strasse	1. Bornholmer Strasse
2. Schillingstrasse	2. Schillingstrasse
3. Friederichstrasse	3. Friederichstrasse
4. Willichstrasse	4. Willichstrasse
5. Bornholmer Strasse	5. Bornholmer Strasse
6. Schillingstrasse	6. Schillingstrasse
7. Friederichstrasse	7. Friederichstrasse
8. Willichstrasse	8. Willichstrasse
9. Bornholmer Strasse	9. Bornholmer Strasse
10. Schillingstrasse	10. Schillingstrasse
11. Friederichstrasse	11. Friederichstrasse
12. Willichstrasse	12. Willichstrasse
13. Bornholmer Strasse	13. Bornholmer Strasse
14. Schillingstrasse	14. Schillingstrasse
15. Friederichstrasse	15. Friederichstrasse
16. Willichstrasse	16. Willichstrasse
17. Bornholmer Strasse	17. Bornholmer Strasse
18. Schillingstrasse	18. Schillingstrasse
19. Friederichstrasse	19. Friederichstrasse
20. Willichstrasse	20. Willichstrasse
21. Bornholmer Strasse	21. Bornholmer Strasse
22. Schillingstrasse	22. Schillingstrasse
23. Friederichstrasse	23. Friederichstrasse
24. Willichstrasse	24. Willichstrasse
25. Bornholmer Strasse	25. Bornholmer Strasse
26. Schillingstrasse	26. Schillingstrasse
27. Friederichstrasse	27. Friederichstrasse
28. Willichstrasse	28. Willichstrasse
29. Bornholmer Strasse	29. Bornholmer Strasse
30. Schillingstrasse	30. Schillingstrasse
31. Friederichstrasse	31. Friederichstrasse
32. Willichstrasse	32. Willichstrasse
33. Bornholmer Strasse	33. Bornholmer Strasse
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92. Willichstrasse	92. Willichstrasse
93. Bornholmer Strasse	93. Bornholmer Strasse
94. Schillingstrasse	94. Schillingstrasse
95. Friederichstrasse	95. Friederichstrasse
96. Willichstrasse	96. Willichstrasse
97. Bornholmer Strasse	97. Bornholmer Strasse
98. Schillingstrasse	98. Schillingstrasse
99. Friederichstrasse	99. Friederichstrasse
100. Willichstrasse	100. Willichstrasse

* Authorized East German and West Berliners presumably can cross at any border points still open.

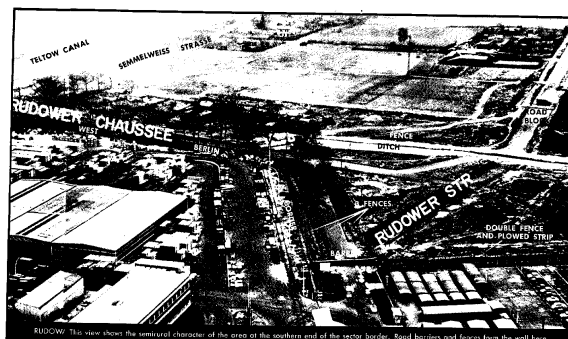


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OBSERVATION TOWERS ALONG THE SECTOR BORDER BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BERLIN

- Between Blankenfelder Chaussee and Schildower Weg (Libani) (25 Nov. 1961).
- At the curve in Hauptstrasse in Rosenhof 600m from the sector boundary.
- In the factory area of VEB Bergmann-Borsig northwest of S-Bahnhof Wilmshof there are 4 towers. (2 are old, the third was put up about 3 Oct. 1961, the 4th was put up about 21 Nov. 1961).
- Just northeast of the S-Bahnhof Wilmshof (12 Dec. 1961).
- In the cemetery 200m north of Sandkrugbrücke (5 Nov. 1961).
- On the drainage canal between Freierichen- and Trapower Brücke (15 Nov. 1961).
- At Trapower Brücke (17 Nov. 1961).
- At Lohndrehtplatz (28 Nov. 1961).
- Replene the corner of Haderberger Strasse (5 Dec. 1961).
- Hofen Brücke (9 Sept. 1961).
- Between Massonne Brücke and Ernst Koller Brücke about 400m from the Teltow Canal. (11 Jan. 1962).
- 300m north of Massonne Brücke (15 Dec. 1961).
- Near Darkmarteig opposite the US Army Installation in Rudow (Sept. 1961).
- 500 northeast of the junction of Deutschdollar Strasse with the sector boundary (Rudow). (12 Sept. 1961).



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